



SS. Osmund & Andrew's RCP School

Attendance & Absence Policy

***Together in Love, Growing in Faith, A Journey of Hope.
Together in Love, Faith and Hope.***

Last reviewed: November 2024

This policy will be reviewed in line with the policy review schedule

Mission Statement

Together in Love, Growing in Faith, A Journey of Hope. Together in Love, Faith and Hope.

Statement of intent

SS Osmund & Andrew's believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's Attendance Manager is Mrs Proctor and the Pastoral Manager is Mrs Kenyon-Kellet, both can be contacted via office@ss-osands.bolton.sch.uk with any concerns or queries about attendance.

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- 'Working together to improve school attendance' – Latest Version
- 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023' – Latest Version
- 'Children missing education' – Latest Version
- 'Providing remote education' – Latest Version
- 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance' – Latest Version

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The Attendance Manager, with support from SLT and the Pastoral Manager, is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.

Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.

Punctuality

School starts at 8.45am.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 8.55am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at 9.30am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by 1:00pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time

If children are 5 minutes late every day that adds up to over 3 days lost each year. 15 minutes late is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.

Absences

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 8.55am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by text message or phone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

All absences without reason will be marked as unauthorised on your child's attendance record.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

Pupils are required to attend school for 190 days each year

Schools absences and attendance figures:

'PUPIL' Final Attendance for the year	Equal to days absent	Equal to weeks absent
95%	9 days	2 weeks
90%	19 days	4 weeks

85%	29 days	6 weeks
80%	38 days	8 weeks
75%	48 days	10 weeks
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks
65%	67 days	13.5 weeks

If a pupil's attendance drops below **85 percent**, a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

Attendance register

The school uses BROMCOM to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole or partial school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments

- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil’s education into account. The headteacher’s decision is not subject to

appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a

school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will

secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Illness

In many cases, imposing a requirement to provide medical evidence is a justified and necessary part of combatting poor attendance and safeguarding pupils. However, it should not be used prematurely, nor should it be used as a blanket measure based on attendance thresholds. The requirement should only be imposed once the school is sure that it is justified.

Schools will consider the use of a Medical Action Plan or Medical Consent Form ([Appendix 1](#)) in cases where absences due to illness are a concern.

Penalty Notices

Please see [Appendix 2](#) for the Bolton Council Penalty Notice Information for Parents and Carers.

Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the Attendance Manager, supported by the SLT and Pastoral Manager, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

The school will use attendance data to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance by issuing Termly and End of Year 100% attendance certificates.

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with

pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Pastoral Manager will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the Pastoral Manager will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the Attendance Manager and/or Pastoral Manager will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

Persistent absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Legal intervention

The school will follow the LA Staged Attendance Process and allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance are not having the desired effect, the School will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Monitoring and analysing absence

The Attendance Manager will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is arranged quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.

- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance manager will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance manager will provide regular reports to SLT to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

SS Osmund and Andrew's will follow the LA Staged Attendance Process and has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the Attendance Manager.
2. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided.
3. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
4. If a pupil's attendance falls below 96 percent, the Attendance Manager or Pastoral Manager may speak to the pupil and/or parents to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance.

5. At the end of each half term, school will send home attendance letters to all parents whose child has attendance below 96 percent. The letter sent home will raise concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, the attendance letter will explain that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the Pastoral Manager contacts the parents to discuss this. This will be known as **Stage One – Cause for Concern** ([see appendix 3](#)). Attendance will be monitored closely for 4-6 weeks.
7. After the 4-6 week monitoring period, if the child's attendance has improved, the school will end the staged process and continue to monitor attendance, or agree to continue on the staged process for an agreed period of time. A letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 96 percent.
8. If attendance does not improve after the 4-6 week monitoring period, parents will be invited to attend a School Attendance Meeting to discuss their child's absences, explore reasons for absence and to look at strategies to improve attendance. The meeting should agree a clear, personalised plan with actions and targets. This will be known as Stage 2 – School Attendance Meeting ([see appendix 4](#)).
9. If targets are not met, a Notice to Improve will be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support and work with school to improve their child's attendance ([see appendix 5](#)).
10. Throughout the attendance monitoring process, school may liaise with the LA Early Intervention Service for support, advice and guidance.

Appendix 1.

Medical Action Plan

PUPIL NAME		DATE OF BIRTH	YEAR GROUP	TEACHER/KEY ADULT NAME
SEND stage:		Action Plan Chair/Coordinator:		
Attendance %:		No of broken weeks:	No. of days off school	
People invited to attend	Name:	Signature:	Date of Medical Action Plan	
Pupil			GP Consent gained?	Y / N
Parent / Carer			Consent form completed	Y / N Date:
School Staff			Decision made to authorise absence?	Y / N Date:
School Governor				
School Nurse			Name of person authorising	
Other Agencies			Date of Review	
Medical Issues		Medical Evidence provided by	Date & Type of evidence	
Identified Difficulties		Intervention Required	Provided by / Date	
Target Attendance Level				

Medical Consent Form

Parent's Name:	
Parent's Address:	
Child's Name:	
Child's DOB:	
Child's Address (<i>if different to above</i>)	
Medical Professional's Name:	
Medical Professional's Address:	

I understand that by signing this form I grant permission for a representative of the school to seek medical information regarding the named child in relation to his or her attendance at school or otherwise.

Parent's Signature:

Date of Signature:

Appendix 2.

School Attendance and Penalty Notices

Information for parents and carers

Your child's education is really important. Regular attendance at school increases your child's chance of getting good qualifications and a good job.

Children need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in primary and secondary school.

The Law

You are responsible for:

- Ensuring your children receive full time education
- Their regular and punctual attendance at school

As the parent you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly and the absence is unauthorised by the Headteacher, even if they are missing school without your knowledge.

If you fail to ensure your child's regular attendance at school the Local Authority may issue a penalty notice or instigate legal proceedings for an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

What is regular attendance?

In April 2017, the Supreme Court held that attending school "*regularly*" means attendance in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school and not "*sufficiently frequent attendance*". This means that a child must attend school on every day that the school requires him or her to do so and failure to do this may lead to the commission of an offence.

What counts as unauthorised absence?

- Any absence from school that the school has not given permission for
- Truancy from school, with or without parent's knowledge
- Parentally condoned absence (i.e. you know your child is absent from school and you do nothing about it)
- Delayed return from a period of leave of absence
- Arriving late at school after the register has closed

Can I take my child out of school for a holiday during term time?

You should not expect your child's school to agree to an absence for a holiday in term time.

The regulations make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

If you feel there are exceptional circumstances why your child needs to be absent from school, you should apply in advance, by writing to the Headteacher explaining clearly the dates and reasons you are requesting leave of absence.

It is at the discretion of the Headteacher whether to authorise the absence. If the school refuses a request for leave of absence and the child is still taken out of school this will be recorded as unauthorised absence

Changes to the issuing of a Penalty Notice effective from 19th August 2024.

Following extensive development with schools and local authorities, a new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence is being introduced from 19th August 2024.

This will ensure that penalty notices are issued consistently across England, ensure a support first approach is adapted (except for a term time holiday).

What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and can be issued when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (equivalent of 5 days consecutive or otherwise) over a 10week rolling school week. A separate Penalty Notice can be issued for each parent per child.

You have to pay a fine, but you do not have to appear in Court. You also have to make sure that your child's attendance at school improves.

Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

Is a notice to improve given?

The school may send you a notice to improve telling you that a Penalty Notice may be issued once the threshold of 10 sessions has been met. This notice to improve will also include details of your child's absences and the support that school has put in place to address the irregular attendance. If you receive a notice to improve this is a further opportunity for you to work with the school to improve your child's attendance and avoid the need to issue a Penalty Notice.

Your child must have no further unauthorised absences from school from the date of the letter. If your child's unauthorised absence continues then school may request that a Penalty Notice be issued by the Local Authority.

The school is not required to send a notice to improve where the absence is due to an unauthorised holiday during term time.

What are the costs?

£160 if you pay within 28 days of receipt of a Penalty Notice reducing to £80 if you pay within 21 days. (Per parent, per child).

With any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3year period, the amount will be charged at £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.

There is a national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another tool will be considered (such as prosecution)

Is there an appeal process?

There is no right of appeal by parents against a Penalty Notice.

What happens if I don't pay?

If you don't pay in full within 28 days, Bolton Council is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child.

If proven this can attract a range of fines up to £1,000 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences depending on individual circumstances.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice, but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. A prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Penalty Notice, depending on your circumstances.

The Local Authority can also prosecute parents for non-attendance without issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice

If the poor school attendance persists the Local Authority may also consider prosecution under Section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996, which can carry a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to three months imprisonment.

What can I do?

Ensure your child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Lateness can be very disruptive for the class and for your child.

Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of them missing school. If you suspect your child is not happy in school, you should contact the school as soon as possible.

Take an interest in your child's education, ask about their day, praise and encourage achievements at school.

Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

If you are experiencing problems with your child's attendance at school, it is really important that you work closely with school to resolve the matter. Alternatively, for further guidance and support you can contact:

Child Employment and Enforcement Officer Early Intervention Service

1st Floor, BASE Marsden Road Bolton

BL1 2PF

Tel: 01204 338173

Moments matter, attendance counts. Every lesson counts. Improving attendance, raising attainment

The legal definitions of 'parent' are:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children's Act (1989)
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

Appendix 3.

Stage 1 – Cause for concern

Stage 1 Actions

- Noticing period – initial supportive phone calls home from class teacher/form tutor/Year group manager/pastoral lead/attendance lead to discuss absences and ask if there is anything school can help with. When the pupil does attend, there should be supportive conversations with parents at the door (primary-aged) or with pupil directly (secondary-aged). Any improvement in attendance should be acknowledged.
- Where attendance continues to be a concern, school should make further contact with parents either by telephone or in person, to ask about reasons for absence and to remind them of the impact of poor attendance.
- School should attempt to resolve any issues that arise from these conversations and offer support and advice.
- School should:
 - Check if pupil has a SEND Support Plan/EHCP/access plan/behaviour plan or equivalent. Is this meeting the identified need? Are there any unidentified needs?;
 - Talk to the class teacher/form tutor/other colleagues about any possible in-school difficulties (relationships, academic pressures, changes in behaviour etc) to identify any circumstances that could be impacting on attendance;
 - Talk to the parent or pupil (if age appropriate) about anything that may be causing concern outside of school;
 - Establish whether there are any medical needs;
 - Provide the opportunity to catch up on any work missed through absences.
- Where parents cite medical issues as the reason for absence, schools may wish to consider the use of a medical action plan. Guidance on medical action plans can be found here: [medical action plans](#).
- For pupils displaying anxiety around attending school:
 - Offer a key adult who can meet the pupil at the start of the school day and provide support at other times;
 - Signpost to appropriate apps and online sources of support, skilled colleagues in school, the school counselling service or GP if appropriate. The School Nursing Service can also support schools by offering screening and support for young people who are struggling with their emotional health;
 - Refer to the Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) guidance documents.
- Where there are early indications that things are not going well for the family and support needs may go beyond what the school can offer, school should offer early help to families through

completion of an Early Help Assessment (EHA). Where parents agree, an EHA should be completed, and actions taken as appropriate following the assessment.

- If the family already has an EHA and are part of the Child Action process, school should collaborate with the lead professional to share concerns about attendance and ensure that it is considered as part of the relevant assessment and that actions are included in the child/family's plan. The same applies in cases where the pupil has a Social Worker; attendance should be addressed as part of the child/family's plan and multi-agency meetings.
- School may wish to send a letter to all adults with parental responsibility or day-to-day care (this may include parents, stepparents and any other adults who are residing with and caring for the pupil) summarising the attendance issues and the support that has been offered and put in place.
- School should monitor attendance robustly, ensuring first day calling for any further absences and follow-up conversations with pupil and parents.
- Where the pupil has a Social Worker or Youth Offending Team worker, school should inform them of any unexplained absences.
- School should keep in regular contact with family, arranging meetings and home visits as necessary.

Next steps

- Attendance improved to satisfactory level = End staged process and monitor attendance.
- Attendance improving and agreed plan of support in place = Remain at Stage 1 for agreed period.
- Attendance not improving despite agreed plan of support in place, parents not sufficiently engaging with the plan or no engagement from parents in Stage 1 = **MOVE TO STAGE 2**

Appendix 4.

Stage 2 – School Attendance Meeting

Stage 2 Actions

- School should send the suggested [Stage 2 letter](#) to parents and other adults with 'day to day care' of the pupil. This can include an invite to a School Attendance Meeting, or a separate letter can be sent for this purpose (schools may already have a letter in place).
- School should consider whether to invite the pupil, for example in the case of secondary-aged and older primary-aged pupils.
- School Attendance Meeting should be chaired by an appropriate member of the school staff.

- Discussion at the meeting should summarise absences, explore reasons for absence and strategies to improve attendance.
- **If parents have previously refused the offer of early help and an EHA, this should be offered again by school.**
- **School should suggest an Attendance contract.**
- If parents cite medical issues as reasons for absence at this stage, a [medical action plan](#) could be offered.
- The meeting should agree a clear, personalised plan with actions and targets.
- Review date to be set for **4-6 weeks**.
- If the pupil is already in the Child Action or Child Protection process, a separate School Attendance Meeting is not necessary as actions to address attendance should be included in the child/family's plan. Schools should liaise with the lead professional, Social Worker, or Virtual School to ensure that is the case.
- School should continue to monitor attendance robustly, ensuring first day calling for any further absences and follow-up conversations with parents and pupil (where appropriate).
- Where the pupil has a Social Worker or Youth Offending Team Worker, school should inform them of any unexplained absences.
- School to maintain regular contact with family, including meetings and home visits as necessary.
- School maintains accurate register marks if prosecution is considered.

Next steps

At end of the agreed 4–6-week review period, school should conduct a review of the case to decide whether to start the formal process which may lead to enforcement. This review should include consideration of attendance records (authorised & unauthorised absences), parent contact and pupil view where appropriate. Advice can be sought from Early Intervention Service (EIS) as to next steps.

Referrals for enforcement for pupils that are part of a Child Action, Child in Need or Child Protection process should not be made without consultation with the lead professional or Social Worker.

- Significant improvement in attendance since School Attendance Meeting/agreement of personalised plan = review with parents either by meeting, phone, or letter, then continue to monitor for an agreed period (staged process can then be ended if review period is successfully completed).
- Attendance improving and agreed plan of support in place = Remain at Stage 2 for an agreed period.
- Attendance not improving despite personalised plan, parents not sufficiently engaging with the plan or no engagement from parents in Stage 2 then proceed to Stage 3.

Attendance contract

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school (except for independent schools and non-maintained special schools) to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision.

An attendance contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.

There is no obligation on the school to offer an attendance contract, and it may not be appropriate in every instance, but an attendance contract should always be explored before moving forward to prosecution.

The aim from the outset should be for the parent(s), the pupil where they are old enough and the school to work in partnership. Where a school decide to use an attendance contract, a meeting should be arranged with the parent(s). It should include the pupil if they are old enough to understand. The meeting should explain the purpose of an attendance contract and why using one would be beneficial in the family's circumstances. The parent(s) should be asked to outline their views on the pupil's attendance at school, any underlying issues and how they believe these should be addressed. The meeting should also allow them to share their views on the idea of an attendance contract and what type of support they think would be helpful to secure the pupil's regular attendance. Where a parent fails to attend the meeting without good reason or notification, further attempts should be made to contact them and arrange another meeting but all attempts at support should be recorded. One attendance contract may be arranged with all parents, or in circumstances where it is desirable to have different requirements for each parent then separate attendance contracts for each parent should be arranged.

Contents of an attendance contract:

- Details of the requirements the parent(s) is expected to comply with;
- A statement from the school agreeing to provide support to the parent(s) to meet the requirements and setting out details of the support;
- A statement by the parent that they agree to comply with the requirements for the period specified by the contract.

The requirements specified, and the support provided, will depend on the individual case, and should be tailored to the needs of the individual parent and family. There is not, therefore, a prescribed list, but requirements may include:

- Measures to ensure the pupil attends school or alternative provision punctually and regularly;
- Requiring the parent to attend meetings with the school and/or local authority;
- Accessing or partaking in the support or programmes offered;
- Working with or accessing other separate support provided to the pupil at school level (e.g. being on report).

The support provided to help the parent satisfy those requirements may include:

- Provision of a lead practitioner to support the family;
- Signposting or referrals to wider local authority or health services that might support the family (e.g. housing needs, drug, and alcohol support);
- Signposting or referrals to voluntary and community sector programmes or support (e.g. foodbanks or community support groups);
- Formal interventions such as family group conferencing, peer mentoring or literacy classes;
- Support and advisory services (e.g. benefit support).

Attendance contracts do not have a minimum or maximum duration. Each individual attendance contract should set out the duration it will be in place, and most are for between 3 and 12 months but can be longer if needed.

Once the requirements and support elements of the attendance contract have been agreed, the school and the parent should write up the contract together and sign it. The attendance contract should be written in language that the parent can easily understand (including a translation where necessary). All parties, including other partners working with the family, should be given a copy.

Non-compliance with an attendance contract:

- The school should work in partnership with the parent to gain their cooperation and compliance throughout the attendance contract process;
- Where a parent does not comply with the requirements set out in the attendance contract, the lead practitioner should contact the parent and seek an explanation and decide whether it is reasonable, and the attendance contract remains useful. If the explanation shows that the attendance contract is proving difficult to comply with through no fault of the parent, then a meeting should be arranged with the parent to review and amend it. Where no explanation is given, or the lead practitioner is not satisfied with the explanation, they should serve the parent with a warning to explain that the attendance contract is not working and may be terminated, and another course of action pursued, if the parent does not engage. This may be in the form of a letter, and record of it should be kept;
- If there are further instances of non-compliance, they should arrange a meeting with the parent to review the attendance contract and discuss how it can be made to work. Following this meeting, the school should decide whether the non-compliance is undermining the contract to the extent that it is no longer useful in which case an alternative course of action (such as legal intervention) would need to be decided upon. The decision and reasons should be recorded;

- Failure by the parent or school to keep to the terms of the attendance contract cannot lead to action for breach of contract or for civil damages. There is no criminal sanction for a parent's failure to comply with, or refusal to sign, an attendance contract. If the pupil's irregular attendance continues or escalates to the point where prosecution is deemed appropriate, however, any failure or refusal may be presented as evidence in the case. It is therefore important that any non-compliance with the contract is recorded so that it can be presented in court if necessary.

Appendix 5

Stage 3 – Notice to improve, request a penalty notice and discussion with Early Intervention Service

Stage 3 Actions

A [Notice to Improve](#) is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. A Notice to Improve does not need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate and an authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate, but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any behavioural impact (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence). A Notice to improve does not need to be issued for holiday or unauthorised leave of absence.

Where a Notice to Improve is used, it should be issued in line with processes set out in the Local Code of Conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school and where there have been 10 sessions or more over the preceding 10-week school period.

The Notice to Improve is expected to include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and details of the offences;
- The benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996;
- Details of the support provided so far;
- Opportunities for further support and the option to access previously provided support that was not engaged with;

- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued, or prosecution considered if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period;
- A clear timeframe for the improvement period of 3 weeks;
- Details of what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like;
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

If following the period of the Notice to Improve and Attendance Contract, no improvement has been made school should contact their Early Intervention Service point of contact and consider requesting a Penalty Notice.

Schools can request a Penalty Notice to be issued at Stage 3 by completing a penalty notice request form. Schools should bear in mind that evidence of actions taken at Stage 1 and Stage 2 will be needed to proceed to a Stage 3 enforcement request.

Evidence of Stage 1 actions should include:

- Dates of contact made with parents regarding attendance of their child. This can include telephone conversations, text messages, emails, face-to-face conversations, home visits and meetings (a chronology/record of contact can be sent with the request if one exists to avoid duplication);
- Reasons for absence/identified barriers to attendance, including issues outside of school which may be impacting on attendance;
- Actions taken and adjustments made to overcome the barriers to attendance;
- Evidence of early help involvement where appropriate, e.g. Early Help Assessment (EHA), discussion with the Targeted Early Help (TEH) or another appropriate service within the early help arena. Where involvement of other services is not considered appropriate, evidence should be provided which demonstrates that it was considered.
- Other support offered/involvement of other agencies.

Evidence of Stage 2 actions should include:

- Stage 2 letter confirming that absences will no longer be authorised without medical evidence (this will need to be sent with the request);
- Details of any further contact with parents re absences;
- Date of School Attendance Meeting with overview of discussion and actions agreed (notes of meeting and plan will need to be uploaded to the referral);
- Progress made following School Attendance Meeting;
- Evidence of a further offer of early help if this was not offered or was refused at Stage 1, e.g. Early Help Assessment (EHA), discussion with Targeted Early Help (TEH), Social care involvement or another appropriate service within the early help arena;
- **For cases at Child Action/Child in Need or subject to a Child Protection Plan, a School Attendance Meeting and plan are not necessary as attendance should be addressed as part of the Early Help process or CP process. Evidence would need to include actions taken in relation to attendance with outcomes, and confirmation that the decision to make an enforcement referral was discussed and agreed through this process.**

The Early Intervention Service recognise that there will be cases where parents will not engage or attend a meeting to discuss attendance, despite the best efforts of schools. In such cases, evidence of the attempts made to engage parents and offer support should be included with the enforcement referral.

Enforcement action is only likely to be appropriate in cases where it is considered that the parent could be doing more to improve attendance. Requests should therefore identify why this is believed to be the case.